

Split Mountain Juvenile Justice 2013 Grant Update



In 2013, Split Mountain Youth Center (SMYC) was granted federal funding to establish early intervention services for at-risk youth from the Native American community in the Uintah Basin. The Grant employs four staff, three Counselor positions and one Tech II.

The Split Mountain Youth Center provides several levels of assistance for families. The staff facilitates two evidence-based programs available to youth and their families: Thinking For A Change (T4C) and Strengthening Families (SF). Thinking For A Change addresses cognitive self-change, problem solving, and social skill building groups for youth. This program runs a ten-week session for low-risk youth and a fifteen-week session for moderate/high-risk youth. The “Strengthening Families” program incorporates the entire family in the process. It focuses on improving communication in families and teaching parents and teens how to come together to set positive goals. This runs a fourteen-week session for youth and their families.

In addition to the two programs, staff provides counseling to families in crisis. This provides parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to have their questions or concerns addressed regarding their child’s behavior, which further assists in addressing acting-out behavior. Staff offers counseling to families as an opportunity to open lines of communication so that conversations can be had in a calm and composed manner.

Staffs employed through the grant have work experience with youth and college education. Staff work well together to meet the goals of the Grant. In late 2013, Vicky Chapoose a Ute Tribe member was hired to fulfill one of the full-time counselor positions. She arrived with enthusiasm and a positive outlook on what the Grant could accomplish with the Ute Tribal youth. She brought insight, cultural competency regarding the Ute Tribe and ethical contributions that allowed Split Mountain Youth Center to better work with the tribal youth in the Uintah Basin.

She worked ambitiously alongside her fellow staff until her passing in January of 2014. Her contributions and hard work paved the way for a positive working relationship with the Ute Tribe that has allowed staff to further open doors with the Tribal schools to access their target population.

Split Mountain Youth Center accesses several schools within the Uintah Basin to facilitate the T4C program. Staff work alongside school principals, counselors, and teachers to gain referrals for the T4C program. The Program has successfully graduated groups within Uintah River High School, Uintah High School, Vernal Junior High School, and Eagle View Elementary. Staff has also worked with 8th District Court Probation to gain referrals for youth to participate in the SFP and T4C groups within Split Mountain Youth Center as well as the Juvenile Justice Services building in Roosevelt. The two newly appointed Juvenile Court Judges in Vernal are fully supportive of the SMYC grant objectives.

Since the implementation of the Grant in August of 2013, approximately 300 youth have been served by Split Mountain Youth Center. Staff has successfully served youth and their families through outreach service efforts. SMYC have made enormous strides in improving relationships, and collaboration with the Ute Tribe. We are confident this united front among all participants, and agencies will continue in its commitment to meet the objective for positive outcomes for the Native American community.